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A liberating story-telling event

At this stage it will be helpful if we illustrate some of the principles we use in our work with schools by bringing them together in a story. This example draws mainly on ideas in Chapters Four and Six, of working with tough situations using future planning meetings. It demonstrates how creating a future dream for a youngster liberates him from the present. He does not need to live his mistakes forever, he can now see what he has to do to create a desired future with the realisation that everything he does now will affect and create his future. By liberating him from his past, he is given dignity and an opportunity to go forward. This story also demonstrates the importance of including and having witnesses to the future.

What this example also demonstrates is the importance of storytelling and the choice of stories that we tell. We have a particular interest in stories and how they are told. We would say that we live not only in telling the story – we actually live in the story. We are the story. If you want to understand and make sense of things people do then you need the stories that they are living to understand the things they do. Then when you have the story you can work with the child/young person, family and others to change the story as a way of changing life as it is lived. In the example that follows we wish to show this process in action. We invite the reader to identify what she sees as the process of storytelling develops and changes begin to emerge in the process of the story being created and changing.

“...human beings ... both live within stories and, at least at time, stand outside them as critics, judges, authors or editors. We are not only characters in the stories we tell, we are authors; not only authors but anthologists (we call this ‘personality’); and not only anthologists but browsers in libraries filled with the stories told by others, deciding which to read and which to leave undisturbed on the shelf (we call this “living a life”).”

Pearce 1989, p 68

■ Living the future in the present

We were asked to meet with a 15-year-old youngster who they said was proving very difficult to manage both at home and at school. He was the leader of a gang at school and was greatly admired by the girls. Many younger boys had started imitating him. He attended school everyday, but refused to come into a single class. He walked the corridors, knocking on other class room windows, being extremely verbally aggressive to members of staff and other children who tried to defy him. He had a keen following of four other boys of the same age and a number of younger children who thought he was great. He broke things at school and drew graffiti. He was described to us as pent up and very angry. At home he was the youngest of 3 boys and his parents felt they could no longer control him and had been contemplating a request for social services care. The social workers had recommended independent living as he was nearing sixteen. Meanwhile the parents felt this would be disastrous as, three years previously, he had been a rather sad and unhappy youngster who had no friends and been bullied at school. They did not want a return to that situation. Their other children were fine and were both at university.

We met with this young man, together with his parents, his school tutor, head teacher and social worker. We had set a context in the invitation that we would be having a meeting 'to create the best way forward into the future' for this young man, the family and the staff at school. After introductions and setting the context of this future-planning meeting, we started almost immediately talking to him about his dreams for the future. "Let us just imagine we meet again and it is the year 2018. Hi! How fantastic to see you. Didn't we meet many years ago somewhere in 2007? Tell me – what are you doing? Are you working? What sort of work are you doing? Where are you living? Do you live alone or do you share your life with anyone? I am fascinated to hear about it". The young person began to describe the life he is living in the year 2018. As he did so he was rather tentative and a little embarrassed saying he had few images of his future. We persisted and asked him, "What are the most important parts of your life now, (that is in 2018) how old are you – about 27?" This set off his imaginings and he said, "It is my friends, they're special and they are very close to me and we do many things together. Friends have always been important to me. We play sports, we are contacts for each other in business, drink together and have a lot of fun. They admire me because I have been so successful in my working life." All of us listening were intrigued.

He continued, inspired and stimulated by questions about his living future. "I have been able to get a lot of work through the years and now I am a Director of a Construction Company. It's been hard work getting here and it has also been a lot of fun. So now I am earning a lot, and I mean a

lot, so I am really proud of what I have done over the years to get here. At present I am happier than I have ever been and I see an even fuller future with getting married and creating a family. What has been important to me are my friends and admirers. They have given me the determination and energy to create so much." We went on exploring his dream. His answers prompted more questions from us so he continued to elaborate his answers, which in turn prompted further questions: "How have you managed to be so successful? How did you get into business? When did you decide to go into construction?"

We then started backlighting (Morson 1994) looking at the present from the perspective of the 2018 picture and asked him if he had been to college or university. At that point he kept drawing a blank so we asked him, "What are you imagining about which is not so easy for you?" He became very sad and said that years ago he had had some trouble in relation to school, which blocked the way forward for him. We asked, "Tell us what blocked you?" He said, "There was a time years ago when I was still at school that I had not been into a class for 2 years which meant I was so behind with my work that I was desperate and unsure of what I could do. I felt ashamed of myself and felt I would lose face with the class if I attended and was unable to keep up with the class. I feared that I might lose all my new friends. I could not see myself sitting in maths lessons feeling I was the butt of everyone's jokes. My reading ability was useless and if I went into the class I would have been shown up as a fool." He told us this was why he had not attended class for several years. He had, at first, been ridiculed and bullied because he had some specific learning difficulties and he had told himself that he would "never, but never" put himself in that position again. He also felt he was the dunce of a very bright competent family.

So as not to get stuck with the story he was telling about himself we worked to elaborate our question about his future. "Let's continue..." We made a slight assumption he would be going into the 6th Form (the final year of school before going to University) to do his A levels (the public examination which gives the possibility to gain entrance to a university course if the person wishes that) and attending every class. He saw himself as being popular and a good leader. He would be head prefect in the school as he had a natural ability to lead. In his dream he saw himself as working hard and achieving good grades, helping his classmates with things they found hard and importantly he would never be in a position of being bullied again. This idea was explored further as to what **not** being bullied looked like. We explored with him how he and other children would be interacting and doing things together. Episodic details of his dream were talked through so as to get a real picture of what his life both at home and at school would be like. As a

leader he could also be liked by the teachers and helped to achieve his dream of 6th form and college.

The teachers and parents became active participants in the dream and asked how they had helped him with his maths and reading. They also asked what actions he himself had taken that had encouraged the family, teachers and others in his network to convince them that he was seriously committed to his future. In the co-created dream this boy was suspended from school for a period. Interestingly, he said that had been helpful, as it had kept his "street cred". It also gave him time to catch up, as in the meantime he had done a lot of committed work at home, and both teachers and parents were involved in giving him work and helping him with any difficulties he experienced. In the dream, he then returned to school at the beginning of the new academic year having caught up with much of the work, now an example to others!

■ Focusing on the positives

During our work with this young man no mention was made of his disruptiveness or his problems. Rather, we worked with his dreams and hopes for the future. Every time we spotted an ability in the conversation it was brought forth (Maturana & Varela 1987) into language. He was seen as a leader, as someone who was very good at making friends. He was seen as a fighter as he had managed to achieve a position whereby he would never let anyone bully him ever again. He was a very determined young man who could change his future if and when he chose to. He was seen to have pride in what he did. He always looked smart and trendy. He was told this and he now took pride in how he looked. He was seen as someone with great determination to succeed. Each of these abilities was brought forth as it arose in the conversation. It was believed and could be owned as it was commented on whenever it occurred in episodes of described interaction. Because the ability is spotted as it occurs, it is experienced as authentic rather than as mere flattery.

These stories, in which we identify abilities and values, provide opportunities for all those involved to create commitments leading to aesthetic action. In this situation, bringing forth by naming the ability of determination and the importance of maintaining pride and dignity enabled this young person to choose to work extremely hard at home so that when he came back to school he was not so far behind. His ability to exercise responsibility and care for others to make sure they were not humiliated was also brought forth and named in the interview so that, on return, he could begin to talk to the others about his hopes for the future as a responsible person. Then he extended this to his gang, showing them that if they were to get on they needed some basic skills too.

Through the conversation we worked with his family creating a dignified position for him. Thus his parents could begin to enjoy him and notice his strengths and when things worked well for him and them. The family had fallen into a cycle of despair, feeling the young person could do nothing right. But when they were given the opportunity to dream, having seen their son through new eyes, they had ideas about his future as an entrepreneur and as someone who had a special ability to make friends and influence people. This all began in the conversation talking about dreams. As soon as their son began to describe successes in his imagined picture their spirits lifted and they began to feel hope.

■ Working with his gang

Further on in this process we also met with the gang. We had conversations with them about their dreams and hopes for them as a group as well as for each individual. Ways forward, using their abilities of leadership and influence, and care and concern for younger children were explored. As members of the gang talked about their dreams, we also identified the abilities that they were able to use together to create an imagined future. Once these were identified by the interviewer, we would look for examples of when these abilities had been part of their way of living, showing to each of them that he already has the abilities necessary to do whatever he is dreaming.

■ The stories others tell about you: witnessing and attesting

Ricoeur (Kearney 1996), like others such as Barnett Pearce (Pearce 1989), in talking about identity talks about identities being created from the stories others tell about you. Ricoeur says if you want to know yourself you get to know yourself through the detour of the other. He puts it poetically: "Thus, the story of my life is a segment of the story of your life; of the story of my parents, of my friends, of my enemies, and of countless strangers. We are literally 'entangled in stories' (Kearney 1996, p 6).

Barnett Pearce describes identity as being a whole library of books, created through the stories others tell of you. Using these ideas we have found it useful to look at the relationships in which these stories of identity emerge. So we focus on the creation of 'we-identities'. For this reason, in this example it was very important that we had the student's parents and schoolteachers and social worker with us in the interview, as they were part of the active creation of a different identity for him. They also saw the abilities he had and how they could be used and channelled in a different way. They were enthusiastic about

trying to create a different future for him. They could tell different stories about him, which they felt were grounded in reality as all the named abilities were in evidence. They reacted in a new way because they were telling a new and authentic story ... he was worthy of being trusted and given a second chance, that he had admirable abilities. Gergen (1999) also talks about existing in relationship and nothing being possible without it. This young man could not have achieved what he did without the newly formed and different relationship with the teachers, his parents and us. There was a relational responsibility creating and forming future interactions.

This story witnesses to an important part of what we do. Imagine the scene. At the beginning of the conversation the story which everyone present may have, is peppered with the problem picture that has preoccupied people for a number of years. Now imagine them witnessing, through giving attention to the developments in the conversation. If we imagine the way in which he tells the story about fearing to go into the classroom because his abilities in Maths and English are so bad that he will make a nonsense of himself and become bullied again. At the beginning the story of him not going to class and wandering round the school is a story of a difficult, non-cooperative person. As the other participants hear of his fears they change their picture of him. He and they get ideas of what sorts of actions they can take to help him make the changes he would like to make. They then relate to him with support and insight. What had been accusation becomes understanding and supportive action. So everyone participates in creating a new relational identity for him, themselves and each other!

This process of witnessing and participation in the emergence of a new 'we-identity' is important, as it is a public statement of a changing role with changing responsibilities and moral orders. It is like the witnessing of a marriage; the move from two single people to a couple and all that it entails, as a commitment and an expectation that behaviour will change accordingly. In the same way this young person attested in front of his parents, teachers and therapists that he would act according to the new abilities brought forth and they were present, becoming witnesses to this attestation. It would have been much more difficult to elicit the teachers' commitment to this boy had we just gone and tried to convince them he was a reformed character!

Dewey (Ties 1988) also talks about identity being an ongoing relational process of identifying the abilities of the other. By spotting the abilities of this youngster we were together able to grow him a different identity from abilities that were there but had not been seen and named previously. Everyone present, as they participated in the conversation, experienced changes, were affected by them and elaborated on them. So a process began in which change

took place for all involved as the storytelling of the future and its reality growing out of things already done.

■ Now is the future

What we do and how we act in the present begins to create an arrow into the future. Helping children to appreciate this and to begin visualising their futures and seeing the consequences of actions they are taking now will begin to limit or widen the opportunities for the future. This realisation is a powerful motivator for more concentrated action today.

By using the idea with these pupils that their futures were created in the present, we were able to get them to reflect on the sort of future they were hoping for and how they were going to live the present to realise their future dreams. We did not need to point out the present they were living would create futures in prison or constant trouble. They could see that for themselves. But by creating a possible picture of a future they would choose, we were all able to join in helping it materialise.

By the naming of abilities in these young people as leaders, as determined, as courageous they began to see how these abilities could be used and have a different meaning in their interactions with others. Our gang leader, hearing himself described as a person having amazing determination changed the story of bullying into one of popularity and leadership; he could probably do anything he set his heart on. Therefore, if he wanted to catch up in his work, he had the necessary determination, and we would support him in whatever way we could. We also named his ability in seeing that bullying was a destructive and horrible thing and that he could be a real leader in the school in making sure it would never happen to anyone else. He had the ability to make friends and he could use this ability to befriend youngsters who were being bullied. In this way by bringing out abilities and future stories, his perceptions changed and he was given more potential resources to interact with others.

■ Conclusion

Social constructionism in practice

This story illustrates the happening of practices arising from aspects of Social Constructionism. Meaning had been created in interactions between the boy and his teachers and parents prior to the meeting. This was a story of a very angry disruptive boy who was leading other children astray. Through the joint meeting, joint action and subsequent contact, a different meaning emerged. This produced a very different relational responsibility, which obligated very

different actions, and responsibilities from both the boy and his network. The 'we-identity' that emerged through the naming of his abilities, within his future dreams, was brought forth in language as they were spotted. New meaning, new 'we-identity' and new relational responsibility were there in the moment of interaction. The boy acted into it and started working hard and not going into school. The teachers, too, acted as part of the new relationship that had been created. They suspended him and supported his learning at home with homework and tutorials, and the parents were supportive and understanding of the extra help and encouragement he needed from them. The ideas of Social Constructionism guide much of our action and when working we look for the possible new actions that emerge from a new relational responsibility that has been created in the conversation.

The next chapter explores the opportunities that Appreciative Inquiry ideas give to creating the school as the heart of the community and how children can begin to see they too are part of this community with relational responsibilities to other members of their community.

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Communities

■ Introduction

In many of the projects we have embarked upon, children and teachers have developed such pride in their schools that they have wanted the school to be the heart of the community, to be the centre of new ways of relating and including everyone of all ages and cultures in a new appreciative way of living. They have felt they want everyone to feel seen, valued and respected.

Once children were confident and well practised in the art of questioning, both the teachers and children created projects involving members of the community. These have been immensely rewarding and have built inter-generational relationships in the community. The appreciative methods, which encourage the telling of stories, have reaped benefits. People from older generations love to tell children stories; children love to be told stories. When these stories are stories of past achievements and high points, there is a great deal of pride and energy in the telling. Children become spellbound and curious, asking many questions. The older person may become something of a hero to them, and they may continue to visit and keep in touch to tell of their own achievements. A mutual fan club sometimes is set up!

■ Dreaming communities to develop projects

In all the situations we have worked with, schools have started with projects within the school; children have fast become adept at asking questions and very curious about the stories people tell about their lives. They have begun seeing questions as ways of bringing forth stories rather than answers. They have begun to see the power of questions and being able to do research that interests them, to find out about other people's lives. It is at this point that the teachers and the children have made a decision to work with the community in a number of different ways.

After doing an appreciative inquiry interview that has ended with questions about youngster's dreams for the community, children in groups of six

have discussed their community hopes and dreams. These dreams have been melded and drawn together so that each group has created a proclamation statement about their dreams. These dreams have then been passed around the different groups of the classroom and the dreams further crafted and adapted. Many of the dreams were pretty similar and so a carefully crafted proclamation was finally chosen for the next project. The other dreams were kept for future work.

Crafting questions

The whole class, both, teachers and pupils worked together to craft questions that would bring forth the frustrated or hoped for dream. The questions created were context specific, remembering – what you ask is what you get. As a result a great deal of care and attention was given to what the pupils and teachers wanted to create in the community. Pupils realised how engaging the whole questioning process was. Many of the potential and active projects developed questions that covered different aspects of the community like facilities for young and old; cinemas and shops; sports facilities; intergenerational relationships; drug free environment; making travellers welcome, as well as many others. The projects often involved interviewing a whole cross section of the community, for example, the elderly, shopkeepers, social workers, doctors, teenagers, and single parents. Others concentrated on themes like the life stories of the elderly or the Living History Project.

Choosing those to be interviewed

Once the project had been chosen, the electoral register was used to find the target group to be interviewed. This might have been done through random sampling or by geographical area or by age. The children then wrote a computerised personal letter telling the people of the project they were about to embark on and asking whether this person whether they would like to participate in this school project. This project would entail 2 children coming one afternoon and interviewing them about the chosen topic and then the children would write up their discoveries and possibly return for an additional visit to check that they had included relevant and appropriate information. The participants would all be asked to a tea party meeting at the school to see theirs and all the other interviewed people's stories.

Interviews

Many of the participants agreed to being interviewed. A date was set and the children went into the field one afternoon. They were supervised by two teachers who they knew would be available in a specific place if the children got worried or had further queries that needed answering. It was felt that the children should interview in pairs for their own safety and also to help each other if they got stuck or could not think of another question.

The children had to think and plan how to record and then subsequently present the interview, whether it be through tape recording, drawing, story telling and writing or video. Their homework entailed creating a presentation of the most interesting or exciting thing that they had heard or learnt. Once this had been done they returned to the person they had interviewed to go through the material and add any thing else the person felt was relevant.

■ Open afternoon

A few weeks later an open afternoon was organised where all the interviewees, parents, friends of the school were also invited. All the interviews were on display in the assembly/dining room areas. Children hosted the whole event, welcoming their interviewee and introducing them over a cup of tea to their parents, other children's interviewees and other visitors. The result of this was many different meetings took place across generations and over generations. Friendships emerged and a sense of community began to develop. The school became a place of meeting and a centre for ideas and change within the community.

Guidelines for community connections through appreciative interviews

Once children have become experienced interviewers, they feel confident to move out into the community:

- Choose a topic of interest or where there is a frustrated dream to work with
- Contact the groups to be interviewed
- Craft questions that would be appropriate
- Go out into the community with teachers and children in pairs for safety
- Children interview appreciatively target group
- Write up the interview for homework and check with interviewed person
- Hold an open afternoon with refreshments. All interviews displayed. Children host it with all interviewees and parents etc. Children introduce their guests to each other and friends.

■ An example

In one of the schools mentioned previously, where they had done some extensive work with imagining the playground, things had changed considerably and yet there were still many negative stories being told about the young people in the community. So the next important project involved reaching out to the wider community where one of the issues seemed to be that the relationship between children and the elderly was not as good as everyone, now, hoped it would be. There were complaints about lack of respect and the children kicking footballs into the elders' gardens and spoiling the delphiniums and hollyhocks.

A letter was sent to all the elderly in the community asking them if they would be willing to participate in a school project called 'Living History', where two young people would come and interview them about what they had done in their lives and what they were proud of. The majority of the older people agreed. Two teachers took their classes into the community one afternoon and the children went in pairs to an assigned older person. They went in pairs for security reasons as well as feeling more confident having another child there to support them if they got stuck or embarrassed.

The pairs of children interviewed appreciatively their designated elderly member. It was hoped that this whole process, with the children asking questions about high points in the older person's life, how and what they had contributed to the community, and what they were proud of in their community, would lead to new conversations and new relationships within the community. This has proved to be the case.

The children were told they must find a way of recording the interview because the elderly person would be invited to come to the school and see how the interview was presented. Wonderful stories emerged and the children were enthused and excited. They reported on their interviews by writing a story about something that really fascinated them in the interview, something that fired their imagination; or they drew pictures, did a feature write-up, a tape-recording, a video, or anything that they liked. Many of the children went back to check that they had all the points the elder wanted included.

The interviewees were invited to an open day at the school where the interviews were displayed. Children hosted the occasion, introducing the older person to their parents and to other older people who read their own and others' stories. It was a truly amazing occasion. Relationships of mutual respect and enjoyment were forged, not only between the young and old, but elderly and elderly and elderly and parents.

At the meeting, many of the older people met the families of the young person and some of them became "surrogate grandparents", helping out with

baby-sitting, advice and support, often to single parents. It had an enormous effect. Conversations took place between old and young when they met on the streets or in shops and took on a very different nature. Both young and old became curious about each other's lives, asking questions about tests done or football matches etc. The children began to appreciate the concern from these surrogate grandparents and were very proud when they had made a particularly good relationship with an older person. They visited after school and both listened and talked about other stories. Both participants felt more as though they belonged. As an added bonus, it appeared the process helped the children's reading and the school attendance rate improved.

■ Interviewing mothers

The next interview project the children undertook was with all the mothers in the community. No child was allowed to interview his or her own mother. These interviews again focused on the woman's strengths and also her dreams for her life. Many of the mothers dreamed of opportunities for further education and being employed. As all the interviews had to be written up for homework, the school read of the dreams and approached the education department. Members of the education department came to the next open afternoon and were moved by the whole event. They requested a meeting between the parents and the education department with the agenda being ideas for adult education in the community. Lots of ideas were generated and many put into action. The elderly again offered to baby-sit while the mothers went to their classes.

The school very creatively included lots of other projects in the curriculum. For example, 12-year-old youngsters interviewed people from different professions like shop owners and assistants, police, doctors, nurses and social workers, street cleaners etc. This project was done to widen the children's dreams of possible future careers asking the person why they had gone into that particular career and what they found most rewarding in their job? What were the values they saw in the work they did? An interesting effect of these interviews was the amazing respect the children had for all people in the community. Some also began to dream their futures when they had felt inspired by the career of someone they interviewed. Motivation with this dream was evident.

The head teacher wrote to us:

"The hall is full of the write-ups, pictures, stories, tape recordings, and video-presentations. After the appreciative inquiries, we hold open afternoons once a term and these have been an enormous success. It's brought the elderly into the schools and people have begun to gather at the schools. It's been fun and the children are

really loving the excitement of having not just the teachers seeing the results of their work but the parents, the elderly people and other members of the community. The connections between the children and the people they have interviewed have also been built upon as the children go back and forth to check things out. Also casual meetings in the street have become friendly and inquiring.”

Questions used for Appreciative Interviews in the community

- Tell me a time when you felt you have done something, (however small) that made you feel really good about being part of this community.
- Tell me all about it, I want to hear all the details, as if a video were running.
- In what ways do you feel people have benefited most from your life experiences and wisdom in the community? What are you most proud of?
- What do people appreciate most about you?
- What contributions have you made, or want to make, or could make to the youngsters in the community?
- What do you really enjoy about your community? What are the highlights?
- What would make life even more enjoyable for you?
- Who are you most supportive to? – Tell me more.
- Who is most supportive of you? How?
- What does this say about you as a person, your values and abilities or skills?
- What does it say about the others in the community?
- If you had three dreams or wishes for this community, what would they be?

Children begin to improvise around designing their own questions once their curiosity is sparked.

■ Taking pride in the school

In one school, after a number of appreciative projects, the children started to feel that the school looked a bit tired and old fashioned whereas they wanted it to represent their energy. They wanted to have it repainted in lively colours. The children negotiated with a couple of local merchants to be given the necessary paint in exchange for some of the students doing a free work experience with the firms. The parents were so impressed by the young people’s commitment to the school and its appearance, many volunteered to re-paint the school one weekend. Other parents provided the food for the workforce and new conversations and relationships were forged.

■ Mergers

In another project three schools were about to merge into one school. So one class of students in each school undertook to do appreciative interviews with the students, teachers and parents in one of the other schools. The focus and questions included interviewing what both students and teachers were most proud of at their school:

- Which experiences they most value, that have meant a great deal to them?
- What were the most precious events in the life of the school?
- When was learning most enjoyable and most life giving?
- Which of these do they want to try to make sure happened in the newly created school?
- What were some of the things they most valued about their school, which they would be really keen to include in the new school?
- What really good things have you heard about the other two schools?
- How would you like to be sure that these things from the other schools could be brought into the new school?

These questions we hoped would bring forth stories that provided the identifying and sharing of what was most precious and how these, through a dreaming process, could be included in the new school. So the joining together would be based on a blending of what is best from the life of the three previous schools. The merging of the three schools went remarkably smoothly with many of the answers from the above questions being incorporated.

■ Interviewing the Minister

In a district in Sweden in a community where there was much delinquent activity, appreciative ideas have been used to change the culture. In one class the teacher had started an appreciative process about facilities for youth in the area to find out what young people most enjoyed and what sort of facilities they would dream of having, that might keep them fully occupied. She was asking the children to think of someone outside school they would like to interview. Most of the class worked excitedly about whom they could interview (children of different ages, parents, local shopkeepers, police and others) and crafting questions about the enjoyable times these people had had as adolescents.

There were, however, three boys who were running around the classroom doing things that interrupted the learning of others. The inspired teacher

asked these boys who they wished to interview and the answer came back very quickly, "The Prime Minister." The teacher took this very seriously and went on to enquire what sort of questions they wished to ask him. After some very respectful questioning which took the boys seriously, the teacher suggested that the Minister for Youth might be more appropriate. The boys excitedly found the Minister's telephone number, rang her secretary and arranged a time when they could do the interview in a conference call. They very carefully prepared the questions they wanted to ask her over the phone and asked her if they could record the interview. They tape-recorded the interview and then edited it.

The children who had done the interview created an exhibition with their tape recording and photos of the minister.

The school then held an open meeting for the local community to attend to see what the children had found out about the most enjoyed facilities for youth in the community and their hopes for further facilities. It was a moving time as each child greeted an adult visitor, showed them around the exhibition and then showed them to their seats, introducing them to another child and their adult partner. Later the pairs interviewed each other about stories of pride and things they had done well or achieved. Many adults were touched by the stories they heard from the young. The three young boys then performed an amazingly competent presentation of their interview with the minister and received an ovation from everyone. Their identity had changed from 'irresponsible overactive youngsters' into very imaginative and competent young people. At the end of the meeting, a leading local politician invited a couple of young people to be spokespersons for youth on the political board of that local community. What a successful outcome!

■ Ripples

We have now worked with a number of different schools that are implementing these appreciative ideas and inquiry projects and we have tried to link them together via email. Students can write to each other about the sort of questions they are using to work on issues of violence in their school; or how they are working on their school's reputation; or on the community's attitude towards them; or how they can involve the elderly in the school. They are emailing each other about questions they are asking: what has been useful? What are they finding? What is happening? What consequences have emerged? The children have found it tremendously exciting to create this connection between the different schools. They have learned from each other and expanded their own projects.

One email talked about how children in a particular school were concerned about immigrants and refugees in the community and how difficult it was for them to integrate. They had arranged a fair in the school where all the people from different cultures dressed up in their national costumes and set up stalls where they sold the food that was eaten in their countries. It was a very good exercise for the school as it bred respect and curiosity for differences in the world, without ideas of right and wrong, but just differences. It gave dignity to all who participated. It became an annual event that the whole community participated in.

In many of the schools where community projects have developed, the school has become the heart of the community. The Appreciative Interviews the children have done have created relationships, not just between the person interviewed and the young person but also throughout the community. The termly meetings have created opportunities for people of all ages and walks of life to meet, share stories of pride and dream futures for themselves and the community. Children and teachers alike have felt great pride in their leadership of such projects.

■ Conclusion

Further similar projects are now under way to transform the lives of communities in different parts of the world, using the children in the schools as the catalysts and questioners. There have been many advantages of using children to be the leaders and catalysts; most people want to support and help children, children also have a curiosity and naivety that energises them to ask lots of questions that encourages people to respond and to tell stories. For the children as well as the adults it has been a way of changing the moral orders of all involved into one of care, respect and valuing people. It has created a sense of autonomy, confidence and vitality in children who feel seen, who have the power and competence to develop proactively their and our futures—whatever the resources.

Teachers are now including appreciative interview techniques within projects, both in the school and within the community, as part of the school curriculum to ensure this way of learning and questioning continues. Young people they feel have begun to look at the half full glass rather than the empty one and telling much more positive, hopeful stories about their lives and their potential futures.

Chapter Nine looks at the relational responsibility schools have to other child agencies, politicians and the public generally. It discusses ways these can usefully be enhanced with benefits to the well being of the school, the teachers and the children.

TAKE AWAYS

- Ensure children are confident to do appreciative interviews on their own.
- Think about FRUSTRATED DREAMS as the focus of questioning.
- Craft questions carefully. What we ask is what we get.
- Stimulate the creation of stories.
- Look to the future.
- Encourage intergenerational interviews as these generate rich stories.
- Be alert to the new moral orders that are being created through the process.
- Relational responsibility and relationships are central in this work. Use questions as a focus to create them.
- Create RITUALS in the schools that keep this work alive.
- Invite the community into the school so the children have a larger witness group to see and appreciate them.

9

The network of stakeholders

In some of the countries where we have been invited to work, education has become a contested space. Powerful interest groups have a legitimate claim to occupy this space. National politicians justifiably claim it as a fundamental part of the national interest. Education then tends to become the subject of policies with endless initiatives, which in turn provoke criticism from opposition parties. It becomes a political space for politicians and others to engage in tough expressions of opinion and positioning.

Local politicians and communities have interests as they see the impact of their local schools in a more immediate sense. They observe the influence of the schools on the community through the way the pupils contribute and behave. These groups want some of the space.

Parents also have a powerful and legitimate interest. How they express this interest can have a hugely beneficial effect on a school but it can also produce enormous pressure on the teaching staff.

Facing these pressures 'at the coalface', teachers in many schools worldwide have become frustrated and this is nearly always a reason why we are invited to work in a school. We find much that has been dispiriting and depressing of the energy and passion that many teachers experience. They have been feeling helpless and, in some cases, hopeless. This sense of loss and disconnection has made their dreams seem impossible to achieve.

But where we have worked with school staff, the methods arising from Appreciative Inquiry have given them hope and a sense of new possibilities, reviving the energy and commitment that brought them into teaching in the first place – into situations where they can work with children and their families.

This has provoked a new awareness that schools are not only about children and young people; they are about the whole community. So the teacher and school staff can develop a new relational picture of who their contract is with and how they carry it out. We have worked with staff who have begun to explore more fully who they are accountable to in the work.

So creating a relational map, as a way of identifying those with whom we have the opportunity of relational responsibility (MacNamee & Gergen 1999), is liberating. It leads us to include contracts of trust with:

- Children and their learning and their dreams for the future.
- Parents and the families that they are connected with through the children.
- Other families living in the same geographical location as the school, and which is served by the school.
- Politicians and the expectations which they have for schools to fulfil commissions so that tax-payers have a sense that their tax contributions to children and young people are well directed and effective.
- Potential employers so that they can have available skilful and able young people to be employed and work with them in developing their business.

In one of our projects, 20 elected politicians chose to join one of the training events. They became very excited as they began to see how we were working appreciatively. They commented that this clarified for them the methods staff groups were using in the schools. It appeared to fulfil their expectations and dreams for the communities that they served. They became very positive about what was developing and contributed to the appreciative processes.

This created possibilities of dialogue and engagement between the teaching and other school staff together with the politicians. The politicians could now articulate their expectations and how they thought about them not only in relation to teachers but also to children and other staff. It began to create a new set of relational responsibilities where they could be in touch with each other and learn from each other, creating dreams for education and children, which could be good for both. Exploring in this way was unique, in our experience, as it developed into in-depth explorations of the contracts with different audiences. It showed how teachers could, together with politicians, create understanding, improving the atmosphere of the school as a centre for so many voices to be heard and satisfied.

At the end of the project the politicians again invited us to meet with them and develop what we had been engaging with and talking about how they could continue to use appreciative methods with the staff of schools and further grow for good futures. The feeling that teachers and schools are part of a network of accountability allowed teachers to be more focused on what they were contracted to do and how this could be something that they would value exploring further and being in dialogue about. These events removed the sense of contesting the space to an appreciative space based on trust in each other.

Another example of how we developed networking, creating that sense of collaboration, was by looking at who is in the network, who is important to work with and develop the appreciative conversations with. We invited leaders and members of the social work service and the staff of the local child guidance clinic to participate in one of the training events. In this way, they could fully understand this changed way of working, rather than leaving them to try to make sense of it without guidance. The people involved with children in other contexts in a town are important. They could then share with the schools the changes that they were making and enhance the seamless nature of this way of working. So staff of different agencies began to use appreciative ways of working in their settings. Over time we received many appreciative comments from people working in these other agencies, saying that it was an enormous relief that they could be part of understanding what the schools were doing. This gave them a sense of respect. Teachers and others from various children's services began to use this actively, to provide an integrated service for the children.

At one point in the schools project in central Sweden, we were also consulting to the child and family psychiatry department. Police and social services had referred a family to child psychiatry. The family reported that they had only come to this appointment out of respect for child psychiatry. They had been to the school two weeks previously and had had an amazing meeting with the teachers and social worker. They could not believe what had happened – quite unlike any meeting they had attended at school before. They had talked about their son's future; his misdemeanours had not been mentioned. They had all felt respected by the teachers and were collaborating with plans to go forward. They were dumbfounded and delighted. Their son was a reformed character; they felt so proud of him and had not had to reprimand him at all since the school meeting. They asked the clinic if they knew whether the teachers had undergone some training as the school felt a very different place to visit. It felt friendly, concerned and interested. We, of course, fed this back to the teachers involved. Their confidence to hold these meetings grew, as did their belief in what they were doing.

Looking at this network of trust, which commissioned teachers and schools, of course involved the parents of the children. Important work has been done with them in some schools. One example of attending to this was a class of 12- and 13-year-olds. The atmosphere in the class was not good and there were more and more complaints both from children and parents particularly over the way they maintained a learning environment. Some parents were considering moving their children to another school.

To tackle this we invited a range of people to come and work together, for a whole Saturday, to create the best way forward for the future of everyone

involved. We invited all the children in the class. We invited their parents making it clear that the invitation was for both parents who were responsible for the child. We invited the teachers who worked with this class. This included the two class teachers upon which the dissatisfaction was focussed, the head teacher and a couple of specialist teachers who also worked with the class. All the parents came except two who could not be free from work for the day.

After some introduction and warm-up exercises, we invited the children and parents to work together interviewing each other about the things that they felt were working well in the school and were proud of. This was important because it moved from focusing on what was 'not working' to identifying what parts of the school and this particular class were working well and of which they were proud. The dignity of the two class teachers began to be discovered and created anew through the range of examples, which teachers, parents and children could identify.

After this we engaged in a large group dreaming session. There were about 75 people in the room and they began interviewing each other about their dreams of success for the children in the class. We chose a future 12 to 15 years from the present and imagined that this class had been one of the most successful of children who had attended the school. It was interesting how the parents entered into the whole process with enormous enthusiasm and fun. Then we engaged in the back-lighting process, looking back from 12 to 15 years to the present and how each person had attained the success that they were describing. This was worked on and developed as the parents and teachers talked, not only about how things in the class room were different, but also about the way that the teachers and the parents created contracts with each other, in relation to the developments of their children. Some parents agreed to come into the school and work with the particular class. The gathering together of resources and communication changed radically. The teachers who had felt complained about and criticised, now saw a rich opportunity to engage with the parents and the children in terms of learning and growth.

■ Conclusion

By actively connecting with all the stakeholders in the community and appreciating that they are in many ways the schools commissioners, teachers have found it has helped to put their work into a wider context. This has been meaningful for them and has also given them a connection to those who determine what they do in the school. Teachers have felt empowered to have dialogues and have appreciated more fully what has been asked of them.

The final chapter emphasises the stance we take when we move into this appreciative social constructionist way of living. It also reflects on the process of the work we have done.

TAKE AWAYS

- What is your relational map around the school?
- How can they become more actively involved in the school?
- How do we respond to our stakeholders so they feel we are in partnership with them?
- Creating dialogues that empower the teachers and so benefit the children.

10

Endings

The people who have been our companions on the road, learning to use both Appreciative Inquiry and social constructionist practices to enhance their work in school have all been enthusiastic and generous in their engagement. What is it that has attracted them? What we have all felt strongly is that the social constructionist contribution and the appreciative inquiry practices arising from it provide a robust collection of practices that have been liberating and 'hope creating'.

What has attracted so many different people we have worked with? We might say that appreciative conversations are liberating conversations. What gives them life, amongst many other things, is that Appreciative Inquiry is not just a series of skills that we pick up and put down at will. We do not simply make a diagnosis of what is happening in a school or community and then make the judgement, "Let's use some AI here". Rather it is a way of being in the world that opens up life. It is a way of living that is founded in incurable optimism. When children, teachers, schools and communities grow and develop, there are school staff who are optimistic.

This is part of what we mean 'in-the-practice' of relational responsibility (MacNamee & Gergen 1999). Relational responsibility includes that sense of reflection on what we do that leads to good relationships and achievements, for pupils and the staff with whom we have been working. It is a taking responsibility for how we participate in co-creation, such that children, young people, parents and school staff can be involved in mutually building up each other. The results of this mean that children and young people in our schools are provided with an atmosphere in which it is good to learn. This is supported by our experiences, as well as what is now, a considerable body of 'action research' about what provides for good learning outcomes. The experience is that it is a positive and optimistic atmosphere for children and young people that facilitates and enhances the learning experience. It is a different way of living.

It meant an early change for us in a number of ways. For example, we learned that there are no such things as 'difficult children' or there are no such

people as resistant parents or resistant teachers. When we describe people that we are working with, we have come to be aware that we are not describing them we are describing our relationships with them. We may find them difficult, or we are still searching for a way to be able to work with them, to move to a conversation of collaboration. Rather, when we talk about people in these ways, what we need to focus on is how we participate in bringing about some of what happens, through the positions we take in the conversations that we have with people. So we start with ourselves, asking questions such as "What have I done or contributed to co-create this? What ways have I learned that help me to focus on what is unique about the relationships with this group of people?" So we open up curiosity about the way we participate in what is happening. It is a way that takes as its foundation that we are, through the attitudes we take, influencing what gets co-created when we engage with each other. The way we look at people, the move from blame and shame to understanding, the moves to the future and what we want to create will profoundly affect how the meaning gets shaped. What can we create? These are moral choices that we make, as we participate in creating our communities together. Responsibility includes being able to give accounts of how we participate in co-creation. It is a way of working to create possibilities in life.

■ Wonder and awe

What are the aspects of this way of living? We have sensed that it is founded in at least two stances. One is that of *wonder* and associated words like *wondering* at something *amazing* in life at school. When we begin to look through these spectacles it leads us to see the wondrous and amazing things that people do in their day-to-day work. We relate to events from the attitude of awe and respect. We would say that it is just awe inspiring when a group of parents, school staff and a child meet after they have been at arm's length for some time and appreciative questions are asked and future dreams are created. One teacher who had been part of a family and staff meeting described, a week after the meeting, how the young person had been at school every day and had put a huge effort into her work in the "maths" class. The teacher described this experience as awesome. "It's amazing and makes you wonder at what more we can achieve."

■ Curiosity

The other collection of relational practices is connected with the metaphor of 'curiosity' (Cecchin 1987). This is a special sort of curiosity that is forward looking and an essential part of the notion of co-creation. It is a curiosity

that looks at what is happening with a deep respect for the view that whatever people are doing at any time is part of the wisdom of their significant group for the time being. So there is every reason for developing a curiosity about what next, being optimistic and trying to work with those involved so that change can grow.

So rather than a curiosity about the past, it becomes a curiosity about how to create the future. Our curiosity is the wellspring that believes that people have resources; we need to be flexible enough, to co-create in working with those involved in relating to the child and school situation. It is a curiosity that explores the richness of relationships that can be formed in future conversations and action. It is a curiosity that explores the things that we find impossible, so as to tell stories of possibility. It is a stance of curiosity that grows from being open to 'not-knowing' and working with/beside teachers and their pupils to co-create ways of living that have not been available before. In this sense, it is a curiosity that invokes a sense of relational responsibility, in the activity of exploring from a "we" perspective, not only an I/you perspective. When we meet together as a team, with the vision of a child or young person's future, the whole meeting becomes an exploration of collaboration, working in the 'we' voice. And it is a relational sharing of responsibility.

This perspective of curiosity leads us to approach situations, in the school and elsewhere, with a sense that what people are communicating by their actions and emotions is an invitation to us to respond. When, for example, it becomes clear to an angry child that we understand and accept the invitation, the outcomes are much enhanced.

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And to know the place for the first time.

At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple tree
Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half heard, in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea.

(Eliot 1944 pp. 43 & 44)

In our work in schools so much has happened to transform the lives of children, the teachers, their families and at times the communities in which they live. It leads us to ponder on the stories that create such unexpected and

awe-inspiring successes. Our endeavour is:

- To speak in languages, which are life affirming, as they lead to energy creating living.
- To focus on achievements and successes. To look at these in episodic detail, spotting abilities, skills, resources and values.
- To identify and name the abilities of children, their teachers and their families as we engage in appreciative conversations. This process creates new identities and human growth.
- Positive talk leads to learning possibilities.
- To create and connect with dreams of the future opens up new possibilities for the present.
- To spread stories of the things that go well. The things that we do that work in the school create commitment and enthusiasm in the whole community.
- To connect with parents so that positive stories and experiences grow.
- To create rituals that keep the appreciative processes in school alive.

All these appreciative processes and endeavours that become part of school life create a way of living, which is perhaps a moral living for the children who are the creators of our future. As we continue we are assured that possibilities of miracles are there for us to live with and grow in life.

■ Seeing children differently

The future of our children is designed through how we see so many aspects of our children's lives. The teachers they see every day are important to both how the children see themselves and, significantly, how we also see our children. There are many, many more examples of ways that the teachers have used the appreciative approach to make substantial differences in school life. The difference most participants have noted is the change in the quality of the relationships the teachers have with the children. It is by living in relationship with everyone in an affirmative and appreciative way, having a belief in people's potential and the power of future dreams that allow everyone to grow. Teachers now feel they have a way of handling difficult behaviour and a way of bringing out the best in the youngsters, helping them believe they have a future they can begin to create today. This is most teachers' dream!

Much of this work has been stimulated by the work done on the Imagine Chicago project through the energy of Bliss Browne and David Cooperrider. We are extremely grateful to both of them, and to the children and many others who have inspired and energised the work we have done, giving children

the view that they are the inspirators for innovations in their schools and communities.

What more should we say? We could indulge in more storytelling about what is happening in the schools who have engaged in these ways of working. The inspiration is in the stories, which are capable of endless elaboration and exploration. We invite others to start the exploration and join us on an exciting journey of fulfilment.

Appendix/Notes

From Whence We Come? or We Know Where We Are Going?

Our history positions us.

And then – Does it? We would now say, “Our future forms us!”

We are both therapists and consultants having been influenced greatly by the systemic traditions of the 1980s where we were encouraged to look at the whole ecology (Bateson 1973) of people’s lives, appreciating that we are all influenced and deeply affected by those around us.

Now we see ourselves as explorers, envisioning futures in which we are deeply involved with many people who are making new lives building on resources and strengths; building on the multidimensional aspects of the appreciative turn.

Maturana (1985) talked about how any social system is always perfect at any point in time. By perfection he meant coherent – that there is a fit between us and how we relate and behave. So to transform situations it was much more effective to work with whole systems and understand their perfection.

Now we are entranced by a sense of engaging with others in a “not-knowing” involvement (Harlene Anderson 1997) with futures unknown and part of a great complexity which calls us, invites us to exploration. The future calls us beyond the explanations of coherence of what has been, to fearless optimism of the freedom to choose and create through dreaming away the problems of the present.

This Maturana notion of perfection initially encouraged us to look for the moral logic in that particular system or group of people. By affirming these, the people in the system were much more open to change.

Now we imagine the future and explore, through questioning and dreaming, how we can and do create new logics through endlessly co creating hope. We suffer from incurable optimism.

In the future that forms us we live the excitement of emergent meaning using the CMM frameworks to explore the stories that may be lived and the stories that may be told exploring the unknown, the not yet spoken.

The Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) model (Cronen & Pearce 1989) gave us a way of exploring how meaning emerged in conversations between people. It gave us ways of learning to ask questions and to be curious about how people create and live in their worlds. It gave us a way of understanding how people always act in a way that is moral for them in this interaction.

Now this is transformed into enjoying the worlds of the imaginary for in those worlds everything is possible. So while we question, we actively watch for what is emerging – like butterflies from a chrysalis – as they emerge, spread their wings and f-l-y ...

We engaged with the notions from Batesonian eco-systemic thinking and Social Constructionist values – that everyone exists in relationships and that meaning emerges through collaborative activities. We exist in relationship, the relational space is where meaning and action get created, our identities and ourselves; this space creates emotions, intentionality and morality. The Wittgensteinian (1953) ideas of appreciating that words *create* our reality not just describe it have been liberating.

For the coming world the inspiration from John Dewey and Ludwig Wittgenstein that all language is action and points us to the future, opens up for us the novelty of what sort of futures we form and what sorts of “heres-and-nows” those futures shape.

In the past we might have said that these ideas help us to focus on the here and now as this is all that we can know. Memories being stories from the past being told in the present.

Now we might say the future calls forth stories we call “memories” so as to release insights and learning for future living and ... that the present endlessly escapes us as future happenings call the present to catch up ...

Appreciative Inquiry and David Cooperrider’s ideas have encouraged us to look at what works. The psychological literature and sports psychology clearly demonstrates that learning through appreciation and realising you can do things is a much more efficient and aesthetic way of growing.

As early as the turn of the 19th to the 20th century John Dewey talked of the future creating the present. He talked about “reflexive imagination” being a uniquely human ability enabling us to have not only one dream but a number of dreams. In this dreaming, he said, “Bring the end-into-view”. He highlighted the insight that the future literally creates and forms the present. Drawing on these insights the Milan Group of pioneering systemic family therapists drew our attention to their experience that questions about the

future create change more quickly and more easily than almost any other form of questioning. When we met "Madam AI" this has also stimulated us into working with people's future dreams: We brought a richness to this that had not been seen before. So in the times to come to dream and thus articulate the future becomes ways of creating action in the present. What we do now affects and creates our futures. We see Appreciative Inquiry as surrounded by many others who have experienced and put into practice activities that create the possibilities of the future.

Dewey's ideas of the future creating action in the present substantiate the value of dreaming in the AI model. Dewey also believed in learning by doing and we find that this has some connection with Vygotsky's ideas of performance. This notion of performance to create and discover what you know has also been influential in how we work, particularly in the education field.

Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson (1968/1992) report on and discuss the Pygmalion effect at length. In their study, they showed that if teachers were led to expect enhanced performance from some children, then the children did indeed show that enhancement. In some cases such improvement was about twice that shown by other children in the same class. The purpose of the experiment was to support the hypothesis that action and activity can be influenced by the expectations of others. This influence can be beneficial as well as detrimental depending on which label an individual is assigned. The observer-expectancy effect, which involves an experimenter's unconsciously biased expectations, is tested in real life situations. Rosenthal posited that biased expectancies can essentially affect reality and create self-fulfilling prophecies as a result.

This also connects us with Daniel Stern's ideas of implicit knowledge: all the things we know but are not aware of cognitively, all the non-verbal things we read in another and know implicitly, reacting spontaneously without necessarily analysing or reflecting on. We respond in our contacts with people, to the non-verbal implicit knowledge we experience. This knowledge is often poorly languaged, but of great importance to how we relate and how we learn. It has added richness in helping us create the best opportunities of ways of relating to one another and particularly to children.

Harré talks about how the shape of the brain follows culture and language, not the other way around (Harré 1998). So what we say influences the brain's development. Daniel Stern (2004 pp. 78-80) talks about "mirror neurones" and "intentionality neurones", which grow and develop with interaction and play between mother and baby. These are to do with the development of empathy and humanity, showing again how important that relational space and responsibility is.

Bowlby in his attachment theories suggested how attachment shapes our brains not just in the maternal relationships but also in our relationships throughout our lives. Later Lemche *et al.* (2006) showed this to be evident in MRI studies of the brain. Attachment is formative throughout life. Morality is part of biology. We might therefore say that Appreciative Inquiry also changes the brain.

The work we do has been influenced and shaped by these and many other ideas. We have a moral responsibility as to how we create each other and how we create the world through the language we use and what we choose to focus on. Our practices are pragmatic, and take the Appreciative Inquiry stance, that if it works and is morally congruent and therefore acceptable to us – use it! These actions become our values.

We are inspired by many different sources. The following expresses much of what we are living with.

“Miracles are to come. With you I leave a remembrance of miracles: they are by somebody who can love and shall be continually reborn ...

Always the beautiful answer who asks a more beautiful question”

ecummings

HOPE Sees the invisible,
Feels the intangible
Achieves the impossible

Charles Calib Colton

Imagination is the beginning of creation
You imagine what you desire
You will what you imagine
At last you create what you will

George Bernard Shaw

Imagination is more important than Knowledge

Albert Einstein

Imagination is knowledge having fun

Peter Lang and Elspeth McAdam, 10.30pm after a bottle of wine

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In their prologue to ***Appreciative Work in Schools***, Elspeth McAdam and Peter Lang remarked that "the school is at the heart of the future of the community. It is in the school where children grow in knowledge, morality and in their abilities to relate to others. The concepts of community and the ability to live to the full are fostered and cultivated through the experience of being at school."

Few would contest such an assertion and fewer still would contest the pivotal role that teachers, parents, pupils and others in the community fulfil at "creating joy and curiosity in curricular learning as well as learning how to live life with others appreciatively."

In this timely handbook, Elspeth and Peter demonstrates the role that ***Appreciative Inquiry*** [AI] as developed by David Cooperrider and others can play at enabling a culture in which teachers, their pupils and others can harness their collective efforts, energy and enthusiasm to impact on learning. The focus is placed on illuminating on the practices of AI as a way of living, behaving, relating and being that values strength based and positive approach to learning. It stresses the importance of valuing and appreciating and of their impact at opening spaces for individual abilities and skills to be seen and valued.

The ten chapters provide engaging accounts including:

- The influences that have created the authors' values on using Appreciative Inquiry in Schools
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- Strengthening and growing connections between the home and schools
- The use of a liberating story telling event
- The power of communities and networks.

The book is for teachers, senior teachers and head teachers, for parents, governors and other community leaders who want to invest in the future of pupils.

About the Authors:

Elspeth McAdam is a retired child and family psychiatrist who pioneered appreciative ways of working with children, their families and their networks. She supervises, teaches and runs projects for and with young people all over the world.

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